THE ORTHODOX WORD

May - June, 1976

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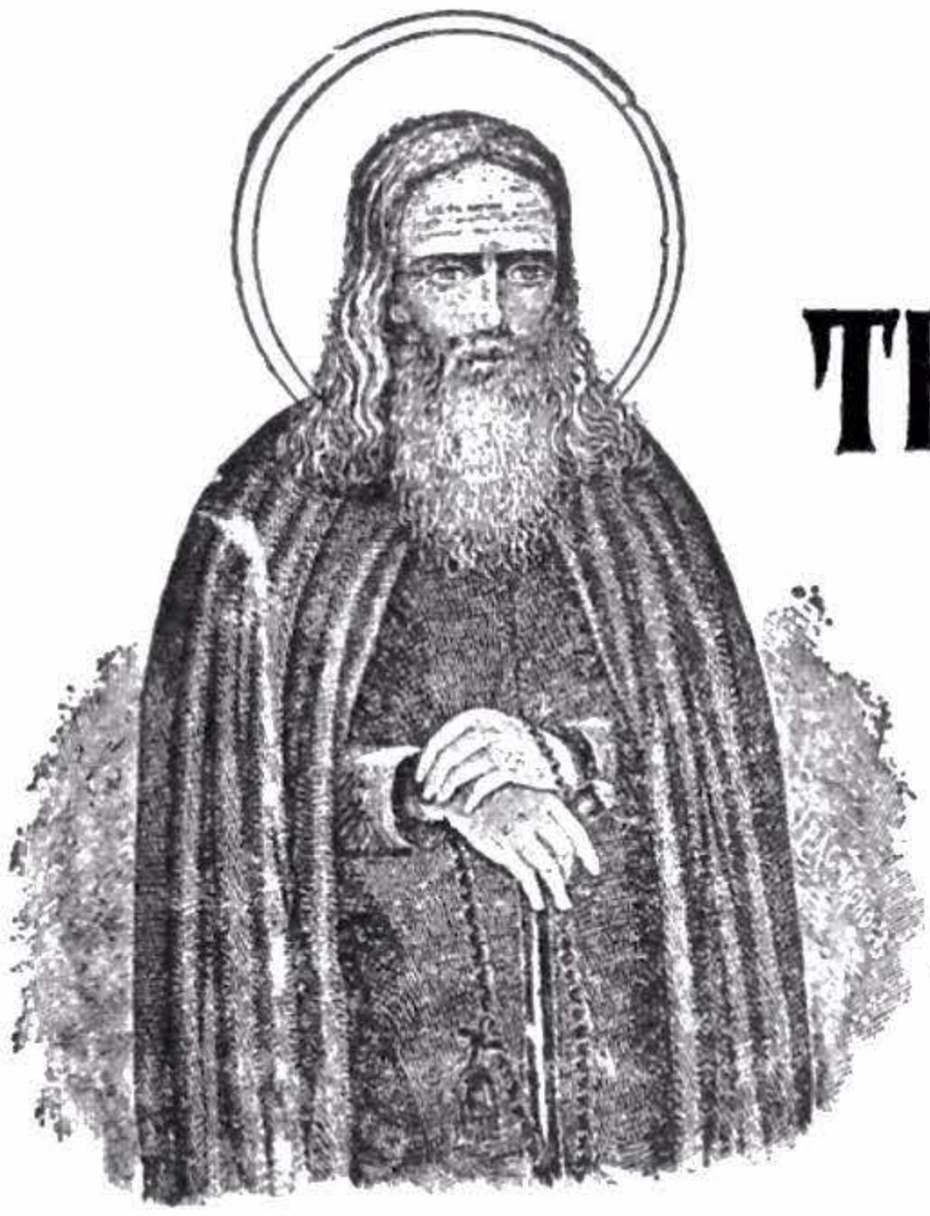

THE ORTHODOX WORD

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Engraving from the Niamets Monastery Press, 1836.

The Repose of Blessed
PAISIUS VELICHKOVSKY

The Final Chapters of his Life

ЖИТІЕ и ПИСАНІЯ

МОЛДАВСКАГО СТАРЦА

ПАѴСІЯ ВЕЛИЧКОВСКАГО.

Съ присовокупленіемъ

предисловій на книги Св. Григорія Синаита, Филоѳея Синайскаго, Исихія Пресвитера и Нила Сорскаго, сочиненныхъ другомъ его и спостникомъ, Старцемъ ВАСИЛІЕМЪ Поляномерулькимъ, о умномъ трезвеніи и молитвѣ.

Изданіе Козельской Введенской

оптиной пустыни.

МОСКВА.

Въ Университетской Типографіи.

1847.

Title page of the first edition of the original Life of Blessed Paisius, published by Optina Monastery in 1847 — the work from which the present translation was made.

The Life and Ascetic Labors of Our Father, Elder Paisius, Archimandrite of the Holy Moldavian Monasteries of Niamets and Sekoul. Part Eighteen.

THE DEATH OF BLESSED PAISIUS

72. Other of his gifts, characteristics and works

He was adorned with all natural gifts. His face was white and bright like that of an Angel of God. His gaze was quiet, his word humble and a stranger to presumption. He attracted all to himself with love, as a magnet attracts iron. He was entirely filled with kindness, entirely disposed to mercy. His mind was always united with God in love; a testimony of this is his tears. For when he would be talking to us on the Holy Scriptures, his heart would be burning with love for the Lord, his face would be blossoming with spiritual joy and shining with love for neighbor, and his eyes would pour out tears, in confirmation of the truth.

How many labors and pains, with much carefulness and fervor, did the blessed Elder undertake in order to know the right and true monastic path according to the Gospel, and the pure meaning of it, undeceived by ambushes and snares on the right and left, encouraging every soul in all good works according to God, and above all those souls that were forcing themselves to do the holy commandments of the Lord (of which St. Peter Damascene so clearly speaks)! How many bitter tears did he shed, in sorrow and sighing and perplexity, with humility and falling down before God, in this search! The whole day and night he searched the Divine and Patristic writings, clinging to God in his heart with faith, hope and burning love, seeking and knocking with humility, fasting and ceaseless prayers with tears at all times. And by the grace of God he acquired in his heart a fount of living water, in accordance with the words of the Lord; and having drunk from it to the full himself, he gave abundantly to all who were seeking.

As for what monasticism is, and what its works, and what is the secret of cœnobitic monastic obedience and what advancement it brings to the novice according to a spiritual understanding: all this he taught, explaining it from the Divine Scriptures. As for what vision is, and the mental prayer of the heart, that is, performed by the mind in the heart, as he was taught this by the above-mentioned Holy Fathers and by God's grace and acquired the habit of it by experience,* — he revealed this unerringly to all who sought, not only by word but also by writing, but only when he was commanded, or convinced by extreme necessity, for he was most humble and fled from praises as from some foul odor. But as much as he fled human honor and glory from his very youth, just as much did God glorify him in many lands, and his name was and is honorable in the sight of all, small and great. To speak of him is a cause of Divine glory; for glorifying him, one glorifies God Who has revealed in these poor and frightful times a true pleaser of Him and an undeceived teacher of the monastic common life.

72A. He was seen in the light of grace-given prayer.

Elder Paisius had an extraordinary gift of flaming, tearful prayer, during which his always bright and magnificent face would become yet brighter and be animated by an inward fire of prayerful feeling. His cell-attendant thus recounts how he once found him in this state of grace-given prayer: "Once, while still in Dragomirna, I came to him before Vespers and wanted to knock on the door in order to find out whether I could come in to him; but since the door was open, I said the prayer and entered straight into the cell. Seeing the Elder lying down, I bowed down and said, 'Bless, Father.' The Elder did not reply. I looked at him and saw that his face was as it were fiery, whereas usually it was white and pale. I became terrified. After standing a little, I

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* Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov writes, in a Homily on the Prayer of Jesus: "The monks of the Moldavian monastery of Niamets informed me that their renowned Elder, Archimandrite Paisius Velichkovsky, having received the grace-given prayer of the heart by a special allowance of God, and not in the regular way, for this very reason did not trust himself to teach it to the brethren. He entrusted this instruction to other elders, who had acquired the gift of prayer in the regular way" (*Complete Works*, vol. I, p. 282, St. Petersburg, 1886). Elder Paisius, of course, taught in general about this prayer, but left instruction in the actual discipline of acquiring it to the other elders.

repeated the prayer in a louder voice. The Elder this time also did not reply. I understood that the Elder was engrossed in prayer, from which also his face had become inflamed. After standing a little while longer, I departed, telling no one what I had seen."**

73. He had also the gift of foreknowledge.

He was also not deprived of the gift of foreknowledge, and what he foresaw came to pass. For example, he foresaw a frightful death for the pious General Gregory Gika, having seen many times in sleep a sword hanging over his head, suspended by a single hair; which soon this General suffered, being beheaded by the Sultan of Turkey, over which our Father wept much. Again, he often sighed and wept over one brother in his community, exhorting him much over certain corrections; but this brother did not obey but put it off, and alas, on the third day he drowned. Another one the Elder much entreated, exhorting him not to leave the monastery, and finally he said to him with tears: "Brother, obey me, for you will not see the place to which you desire to go." He did not obey, and on the fourth day he died on the way, over which the blessed Father wept much. And he foresaw and prophesied much else of this kind.

74. The Sanctity of Christ's slaves is known, not from miracles, but from the fulfillment of the commandments of the Gospel.

Of miracles and healings there is no need to write; for it is not from miracles alone that the sanctity of men who are truly holy is known, that they are holy and irreproachable before God. It is rather from true Orthodox faith, and careful knowledge of the dogmas according to God, and the keeping of all the canons and traditions of the Apostles and Councils of the Orthodox Eastern Church, and an irreproachable life according to all the Evangelical and Patristic commandments. For many pagans and heretics, by God's allowance and the cooperation of the devil, have performed miracles; of them the Lord has said: *Many will say to Me in that day: Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Thy name, and in Thy name do mighty works?* (Matt. 7:22.) And He will say to them in reply: *I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers*

** C. I, p. 133.

of iniquity, who have disdained and defiled My holy commandments (Luke 13: 25, 27). But to the right-believing He says: *If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments.* And again: *He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.* And *He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My words* (John 14:15, 21, 24). And St. John Chrysostom likewise teaches of this, saying: "It is not fitting to recognize that an Orthodox man is holy by signs and prophecies, but rather from his good life, as the Lord has said: *By their fruits ye shall know them* (Matt. 7:16). And the fruits of an Orthodox man the great Apostle has shown, saying: *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering,* and the rest. And *They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts* (Gal. 5:22, 24). By these words the divine Apostle has declared the life, the advancement, and the fruits both of a Christian living in the world and of a monk, so that each might strive to acquire in himself his own fruits. For a Christian [living in the world] advancement is merely to step away from all evils and acquire the above-mentioned fruits; but for a monk, it is to crucify himself, with his passions and lusts, to all this, and to this world. Such a one, whether he performs signs or not, is manifest as holy and a friend of God.

Wherefore, our Father ascribed all the miracles and healings that occurred by his prayers to the Mother of God, as is fitting.

And now, having gone through the whole course of the life of our Father, to the extent that it has been possible for us to see it — for his secret deeds are known to the Lord alone — I come to his blessed end.

75. The Elder's final illness. 76. His repose.

As he continued in his usual labors, the inescapable common debt drew near, the separation of the soul from the body. And, as I think, he was informed of his end by the Lord many days beforehand. For he already left off the translations of books, and only read through and corrected where it happened that there were some things needing correction. Then, falling into a severe infirmity, he became ill and was sick for four days. On Sunday he seemed to be better, and, wishing to hear the Divine Liturgy, he went to church and sat down. Before the beginning of the communion verse, he entered the Altar and received communion of the Holy Mysteries. But after the dismissal he could scarcely come back to his cell, being led and supported; and then he was severely ill for three days.

BLESSED PAISIUS VELICHKOVSKY

The final farewell of Elder Paisius to the brethren on this Sunday is thus described by his disciple, John the Fingerless:*

"All were suddenly saddened and grieved, hearing that the Elder was ill; everything became dark and sorrowful. Soon all were notified that everyone was to be at the Liturgy. And all hastened to gather, like eagles, so that the church could not hold them all. Then the Elder came, supported by two of the spiritual fathers. All the brethren rejoiced, seeing his holy gray hairs, and all bowed down to the ground before him. He went straight into the Altar, and when the time came he was vouchsafed communion of the Holy Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. After the Liturgy he stood on his cathedra and commanded everyone to come up to receive his blessing; he said farewell to all and then went to his cell, and he no longer received anyone."

Fathers Honorius and Martyrius, who were serving him, allowed no one to come in to him except for the eldest and most reverent spiritual ones; for the Elder wished to die in quiet. On the fourth day, the end drawing near, he again received communion of the Divine Mysteries, and having called the two spiritual fathers, Sophronius of the Slavonic tongue and Sylvester of the Moldavian, through them he gave peace and blessing to the whole community, but said nothing about the election of a Superior. And thus dying as if falling asleep, he gave over his holy soul into the hand of God in the year 1794, on the fifteenth day of November, having lived from his birth 72 years.

Immediately a messenger was sent to Jassy from the community with a letter to Metropolitan James concerning the repose of the Elder. And the Metropolitan entreated the God-loving Bishop of Tuma, Kyr Benjamin, who is now Metropolitan of All Moldavia, to go to the monastery of Niamets for the burial. And when the news had spread everywhere of the repose of our Father, an innumerable multitude of people came together, of monks and laymen, priests, lords and simple people of both sexes, and there was a mighty lamentation of all together. We waited three days for the Bishop, and on the fourth day our Father was buried honorably by the whole community in the great church, on the right side.

Later, on Blessed Paisius' grave there was placed a slab with the following inscription: "Here reposes our blessed Father, Elder Paisius, Schema-hieromonk and Archimandrite, a Little Russian, who with sixty disciples came to Moldavia from Mount Athos and here, after gathering a multitude of brothers

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* *Russian Ascetics of the* 18*th and* 19*th Centuries,* Nov., Moscow, 1910, p. 393.

SAINT NICODEMUS
OF MOUNT ATHOS

Continuer of Blessed Paisius'
Patristic endeavors through
Paisius' zealous disciple
Metr. Benjamin, who published
Nicodemus' books in Rumanian
at the Niamets monastery press.

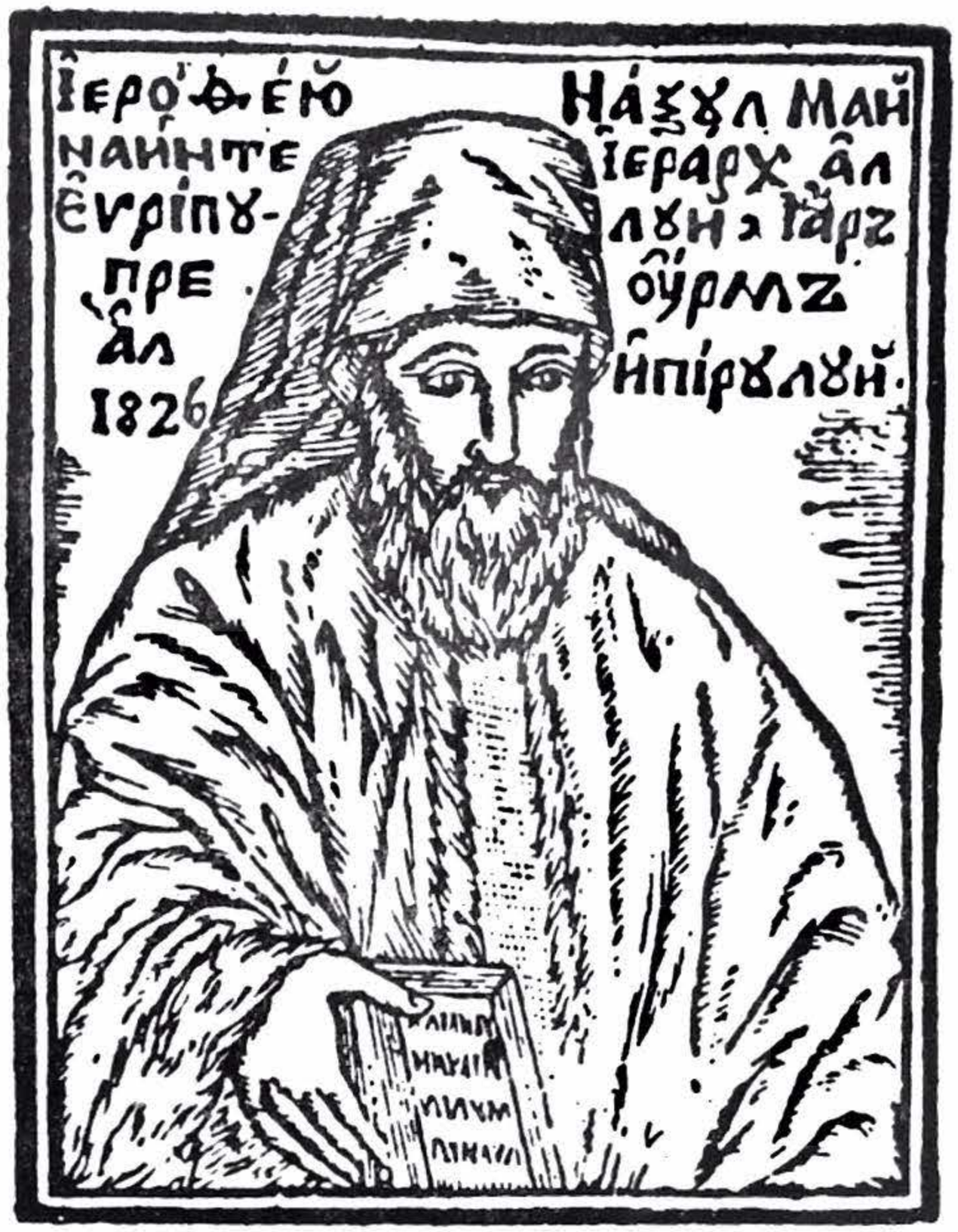
and renewing the common life by his example, departed to the Lord in the year 1794, on the 15th of November, in the days of the pious ruler Michael Sudju the general, and His Eminence Metropolitan James." One of the Elder's disciples, Schema-hieromonk John Diakovsky, composed a "Funeral Lamentation" for the blessed one from his spiritual children, and not long afterward a church service was composed in his honor.*

During the night of the second day after the burial of Blessed Paisius, the God-beloved Bishop arrived, and in the morning he celebrated with the clergy the Divine Liturgy and a memorial service. After some days, with the agreement of the whole community and the blessing of the Metropolitan, the God-beloved Bishop placed as chief in the community the spiritual father, Father Sophronius, as Elder and Archimandrite. And there was for the whole grieving community a little joy and spiritual peace; for all the brethren both of the Moldavian and the Slavonic tongues loved him because of his love for all and his humility, and above all for his extreme mercifulness. After Sophronius the Elder was Father Dorotheus, and after Dorotheus, Father Dositheus. Both of these before their death retired from the eldership because of old age. After Dositheus the Elder was John. All these four Elders were of the Slavonic

* C. I, pp. 132-133. Concerning the service, see the final chapter of this volume.

BISHOP HIEROTHEUS
OF EURIPOS

Cousin of St. Nicodemus, who wrote at his request the *Handbook of Counsel,* which was printed in Rumanian at Niamets with these engravings in 1826.



tongue. After the death of John there was the present Elder, the first of the Moldavian tongue, Father Silvester. These and other such spiritual men were the sacred disciples of Paisius.

77. IN PRAISE OF FATHER PAISIUS, REPOSED IN GOD.

HAVING SAID a little about his splendid disciples, again I turn to the blessed one himself and conclude my word about him in this way:

O humble-minded and meek soul! O man filled with divine understanding! For he loved wisdom his whole life long, in order to be under all men as an ignoramus and one without boldness, a slave and debtor of the brethren. For he learned this good thing from the divine Apostle, who said: *If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise* (I Cor. 3:18); and from the Lord Himself, Who said: *Whosoever of you will be first, shall be the servant of all* (Mark 10:44). Thus he acted also in his repose, not being so bold as to choose anyone to succeed him, as has been said, but leaving it to Christ God and the God-beloved Bishop and the holy brethren of the community to elect an elder and instructor whomever they should judge. But he himself, having fulfilled the duty of his service, departed to the Lord.

And as thou hast departed from us, O our blessed Father and teacher, we thy spiritual children have now been left orphans. We have been deprived of beholding thy bright face; we have been deprived of thy sweet words and thy soul-saving teachings and instructions. This we have as our only consolation in our sorrow: that our beloved brothers, the Schema-monks Father Metrophanes and Father Isaac, have with love of labor written thy life in eternal remembrance of thy fatherly love, and for the great benefit of all zealots and for our brothers who will come later to this community, not having seen thy face or heard from thy lips the right teachings according to God, but who will fervently desire to know and honor thy life and thereby arouse themselves to the doing of Christ's commandments. Of this thou didst speak beforehand in the preface of thy autobiography, saying: "How desirable it will be for my spiritual children, who have acquired love for me according to God, later to hear frequently of my birth and upbringing, and departure from the world, and my life in the monastic calling." Thou didst reveal this so that they might imitate thy zeal and God-pleasing struggle, and above all thy profound humility of wisdom. And this will be likewise for the common benefit of Christian zealots of piety.

Wherefore, falling down, we entreat thee: ceaselessly pray to the Lord for thy spiritual children and for all faithful Christians, that the All-good Master might vouchsafe us, by thy holy prayers, to receive mercy from Him at the Judgment, and that He might make us worthy, together with thee and all the saints, eternally to glorify Christ God our Saviour in the glory of the heavenly Kingdom. To Him there becometh every glory, honor, worship and thanksgiving, together with His Unoriginate Father and the Most Holy and Good and Life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Next: Niamets Monastery after the Death of Blessed Paisius.

OPPOSITE PAGE: 18th-century engraving of Metropolitan Gabriel of Novgorod and St. Petersburg, who first published the Paisian Philokalia in Russia, in the very year of the Elder's death, as a crown to the latter's Patristic labors.

Гавриилъ, Митрополитъ
рѣшскій и трехъ пріятельскихъ
Патріархіи и Святѣйшаго
Правительствующаго
Синода членъ и Новгородскій

ORTHODOXY and the Religion of the Future

Epilogue to the Third Printing

MAY, 1976

IN THE BRIEF YEAR since this book was printed it has become something of a "best-seller" among Orthodox books; if one includes the original articles in *The Orthodox Word* from which it was compiled, there will now be close to 5000 copies in circulation — something rather rare for a serious and uncompromising Orthodox book in the English language. It would seem that, despite the almost universal apostasy of our times, there are still many who are striving to understand and remain in genuine Orthodoxy.

In this year the "religious" phenomena described in this book have become much more widespread. The "Dialogue" of the World Council of Churches with non-Christian religions and with anti-religious Communism (as manifested at the 1975 World Assembly of the WCC in Nairobi, Kenya) has encountered so little opposition that it no longer needs to apologize for itself; the age of spiritual "detente" has arrived, in which, it would seem, no one any longer presumes to think that he possesses the truth, much less wishes to preach it to others. Likewise, the activity of the "Temple of Understanding" (see above, pp. 5, 34) steadily expands and finds a welcome audience among the political and religious leaders of humanity, as attested by its activities in New York City in connection with the 30th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations in the spring of 1975.

In such a spiritually "neutralized" world, the various forms of "meditation" described in this book — and many other new ones — have become the "latest rage," especially in America, where its various cults receive nationwide publicity. A recent article in *U.S. News and World Report* (Feb. 16, 1976, p. 40) describes them as "consciousness cults" and says of them: "Few of the mind-therapy groups espouse religious views. They have a wide middle-class, even middle-aged, following among lawyers, doctors, teachers and other 'establishment' types." Among these cults may be mentioned the "Erhard Seminars Training" established in 1971, "Rolfing," "Silva Mind Control," and various forms of "encounter" and "biofeedback," all of which offer a "release of tensions" and a "tapping of the hidden capabilities" of man, expressed in a more or less plausible "scientific" jargon. By far the fastest-growing of these cults is "Transcendental Meditation" (see above, p. 85), which now claims 600,000 followers in America and is being widely used in the Army, public schools, prisons, hospitals, and by church groups, including parishes of the Greek Archdiocese. In a word, what is described in this book as a demonic initiation experience is now being accepted as a normal and harmless part of ordinary American life, as simply a form of "mental therapy." Can we still be so bold as to say that this experience is demonic?

It is most important for Orthodox Christians to be precisely aware of what demonic experience is. It is by no means necessarily something black and overtly satanic; it is often something apparently light, attractive, and found in conjunction with some of the best qualities of human nature. *All the gods of the pagans are demons* (Ps. 95:5) — but this does not mean that all the pagan religions are degenerate and bloody (although some of them, indeed, are). Some of the pagan religions are comparatively light and noble and are capable of inspiring a relatively moral and refined life, but the power of the prince of this world, the devil, is such that he makes all the pagans his children, destined for hell — unless they find the grace of God, which alone can save them from perdition. The Church of Christ saves men from the world — not merely from the dark, overtly evil side of the world, but even from its highest qualities and aspirations. All merely human devices are powerless to effect our salvation. Not logic, not good intentions, not a tenderly-loving heart — can save one if he find not the grace of God which lifts one above this world.

The demonic religion described in this book is a striving of the human mind and soul *deprived of the grace of God*; all its good qualities — and who

will deny that it has them? — only serve to entice men into a religious experience that cannot save their souls, and by its apparent success prevents them from finding the true path to salvation.

Over a century ago Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov recorded with awe and foreboding the vision of a simple Russian blacksmith in a village near Petersburg at the dawn of our present age of revolution (1817). In the middle of the day he suddenly saw a multitude of demons in human form, sitting in the branches of the forest trees, in strange garments and pointed caps, and singing, to the accompaniment of unbelievably weird musical instruments, an eerie and frightful song: "Our years have come, our will be done!" (S. Nilus, *Svyatynya pod Spudom,* Sergiev Posad, 1911, p. 122.)

We live near the end of this fearful age of demonic triumph and rejoicing when, as our recent Fathers have warned us, *grace itself will seem to be departing from the earth.* The religion of the devil, the religion of Antichrist takes possession of men's souls in direct proportion to the departure of grace; it is the participation of apostate humanity in the general rejoicing of the demons at the end of time to see the virtual disappearance of true Orthodoxy from the face of the earth.

Orthodox Christians! Hold fast to the grace which you have; never let it become a matter of habit; never measure it by merely human standards or expect it to be logical or comprehensible to those who understand nothing higher than what is human or who think to obtain the grace of the Holy Spirit in some other way than that which the one Church of Christ has handed down to us. True Orthodoxy by its very nature must seem totally out of place in these demonic times, a dwindling minority of the despised and "foolish," in the midst of a religious "revival" inspired by another kind of spirit. But let us take comfort from the certain words of our Lord Jesus Christ: *Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom* (Luke 12:32).

The Life of Saint Gregory of Tours

By ABBOT ODO

14. A Temptation

PHYSICAL WEAKNESS often troubled him, for he took no care at all for what concerns the flesh; but each time illness too severely tormented his body, fatigued by the rigorous practice of austerities, he had recourse to his dear Martin and immediately he was healed: this happened very often. When this happened, and in what circumstances, is related, in a manner to delight the reader, in his history of the miracles of Saint Martin. As a man humble and prudent, he would begin by applying to himself material medicines; but the more he sought after these with modesty, judging himself unworthy to receive the assistance of a miracle, the more the Divine generosity held its power in reserve for him as the sole medicine. Once it happened to him that, healed of a pain in the temples by the customary virtue of blessed Martin, he conceived a little later, at the instigation of the tempter, the thought that this agitation of the veins could be calmed by a blood-letting. While he was reflecting on this within himself, he felt the veins in both temples begin to beat violently, and the pain came upon him again with great force; immediately he hastened, troubled, to the basilica, first implored pardon for the thought which he had had, then touched his head to the veil of the sacred sepulchre, and departed from there healed.*

15. His Reliquary Miraculously Opens

HE HAD ALREADY COMPOSED several writings in praise of diverse persons; and although he burned with love for Martin more than for any other, he did not judge himself worthy in any way to recount what there was to

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* *The Miracles of Blessed Martin*, Book II, ch. 60.

write about his miracles — when, being warned two and three times during his sleep, he saw himself threatened with incurring a severe accusation by his silence.

He had had the oratory of St. Stephen, located in the outskirts of Tours, enlarged, and the entire altar transported a little farther back than it had been; but not finding any relic in this place, he sent one of the abbots to the bishop's house to take the relics of the holy Martyr Stephen. But he forgot to give him the key, so that the abbot, finding the relic-casket locked, was uncertain what to decide upon. If he returned to the bishop to obtain the key, it would mean a delay; if he brought the entire casket, he knew that it would be displeasing to the bishop, because it contained relics of a great number of saints. While he was hesitating within himself, he saw the bars withdraw and the casket open as if to attest that Divine grace was associated with the labors of Gregory. The abbot, giving thanks to God, carried the relics to Gregory amidst the general astonishment; and the latter, on his return, found the casket locked, just as he had left it.**

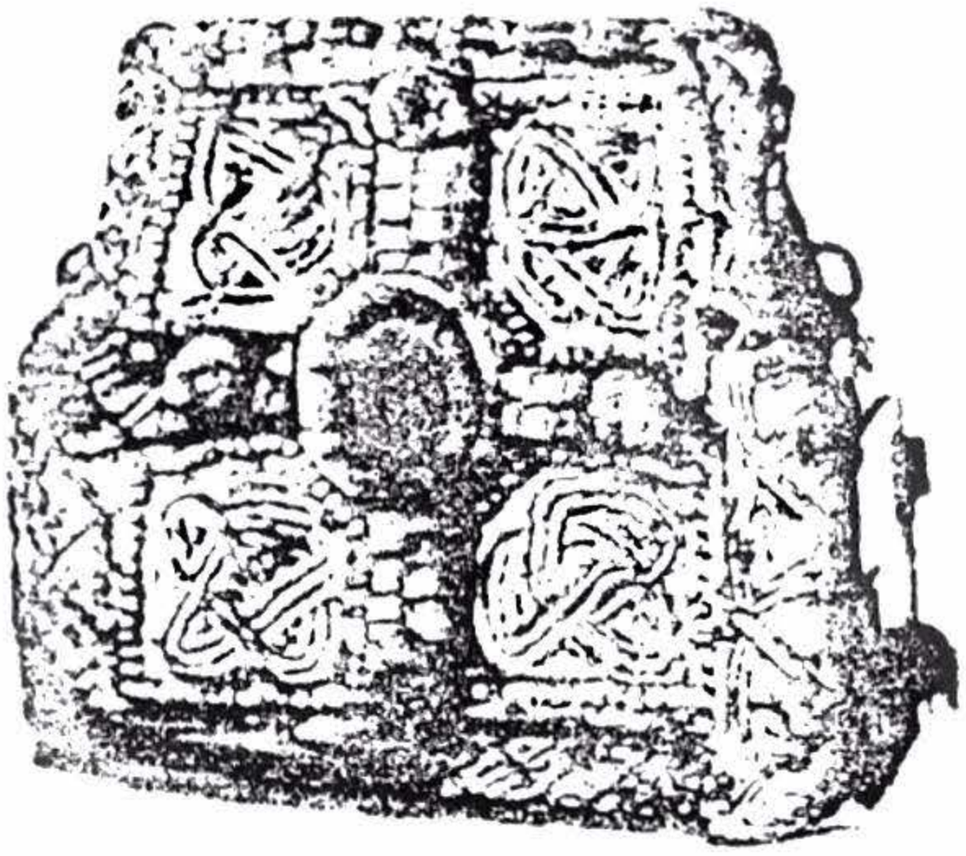
17. His Closeness Heals a Deaf Man

THERE WAS a matter for which he had to go to the town of Reims. After having been graciously received by Bishop Egidius, he spent the night there and the next day, which was a Sunday. When day had come, he went to the church in order to converse with the bishop. As he was awaiting his arrival in the sacristy (for he did not wish to speak in the church), Siggo, formerly the referendary* of King Sigibert, approached him, and Gregory, after having embraced him, made him sit at his side. They spoke for some time together, and Siggo, who was listening attentively to Gregory, felt one of his ears, which had been deaf for some time, suddenly open with an unusual noise. He began to make known these acts of grace, relating what had just been done in him by the closeness of Gregory. But the man of God did not forget his habitual humility and, endeavoring to remove from this man the judgment which he had made, he said: "It is not to me that you should render thanks, my dear son, but to the blessed Martin, by whose relics — which I, unworthy one, am carrying — your hearing has been restored and your deafness dissipated."

** *The Glory of the Martyrs*, ch. 34.

* Legal secretary, in charge of the royal signet-ring by which documents were signed. On Siggo see *The History of the Franks*, V, 3.

The Merovingian King Sigibert I
(from a medieval design on his grave).



A 6th-century reliquary of Gaul.

18. He Invites his Attackers to Eat with him

LOVE WAS TO SUCH an extent the dominating virtue in him that he had feelings of tenderness even for his enemies, as the following example will demonstrate. He happened one time to be going to Burgundy to see his venerable mother.** In a remote forest on the other side of the river Barberon he encountered some robbers, who rushed after him with such force that they seemed to wish not merely to rob him, but to kill him as well. But their appearance could not frighten Gregory, who walked surrounded by the protection of Martin: he invoked his succour, and he experienced its presence so promptly that the robbers took flight more swiftly than they had appeared. Gregory, making use of his habitual love, and without being disturbed in the midst of the disorder, called back the fugitives and invited these enemies to take something to eat and drink. But one might have believed them pursued by the blows of a staff and their horses carried away in spite of themselves with a speed beyond their own power, so that they could not hear the voice that called them back.† Thus Gregory was shown to be both favorably heard on high, and devoted to works of love.

** Who had moved to the family's Burgundian estates after the death of St. Gregory's father. The river Barberon is a tributary of the Dolon, which flows into the Rhone near Vienne.

† *The Miracles of St. Martin*, Book I, ch. 36.

19. The Healing of A Paralytic at St. Martin's Basilica.

THANKS TO GREGORY, the faith of the people and their devotion grew abundantly. And so it happened that the malicious adversary, tormented by a lively anguish and being unable to control the efforts of his wickedness, endeavored with all his might to overthrow the trust both of the pastor and the flock. The very day of the Lord's Nativity, as Gregory came to celebrate the feast pontifically, according to custom, in the chief basilica of the city, one of the more violent of the possessed began to run wild beyond measure, and going before the groups that surrounded Gregory in front and behind, he cried out: "It is in vain that you approach Martin's threshhold; it is for nothing that you come near his temple; for, because of your crimes without number, he has abandoned you, he has fled from you in abhorrence, and it is at Rome that he performs miracles." As the devil was panting these and similar words at the crowded throng, his voice not only troubled the hearts of the country people, but struck with fear also the clerics and Gregory himself. They entered the basilica shedding abundant tears, and all prostrated themselves on the pavement while praying in order to be worthy of the presence of the holy man. A man who, for over three years, had had both hands and a foot paralyzed, was prostrate like the others before the holy altar, imploring the aid of the blessed Martin, when, being suddenly overcome by fever, he began to suffer as if he had been under torture. Nonetheless, the sacred solemnities were celebrated; and at the moment when the holy hierarch, his tears flowing more copiously, was awaiting the coming of the blessed Martin — when, according to custom, he was covering with a veil the instruments of the Divine Mystery — the sick one was fully restored to health.

Immediately Gregory, full of joy, gave thanks to God Almighty and, his eyes filled with a rain of tears, he burst out with these words which he addressed to the people: "May fear depart from your hearts, my brothers, for the blessed confessor dwells with us, and you should by no means believe the devil who is a liar from the beginning of the world and has never known the truth." After he had given the people these words of consolation, and others also, the universal grief was turned to joy, and all, thanks to Martin and to Gregory, returned home happier than when they had come.*

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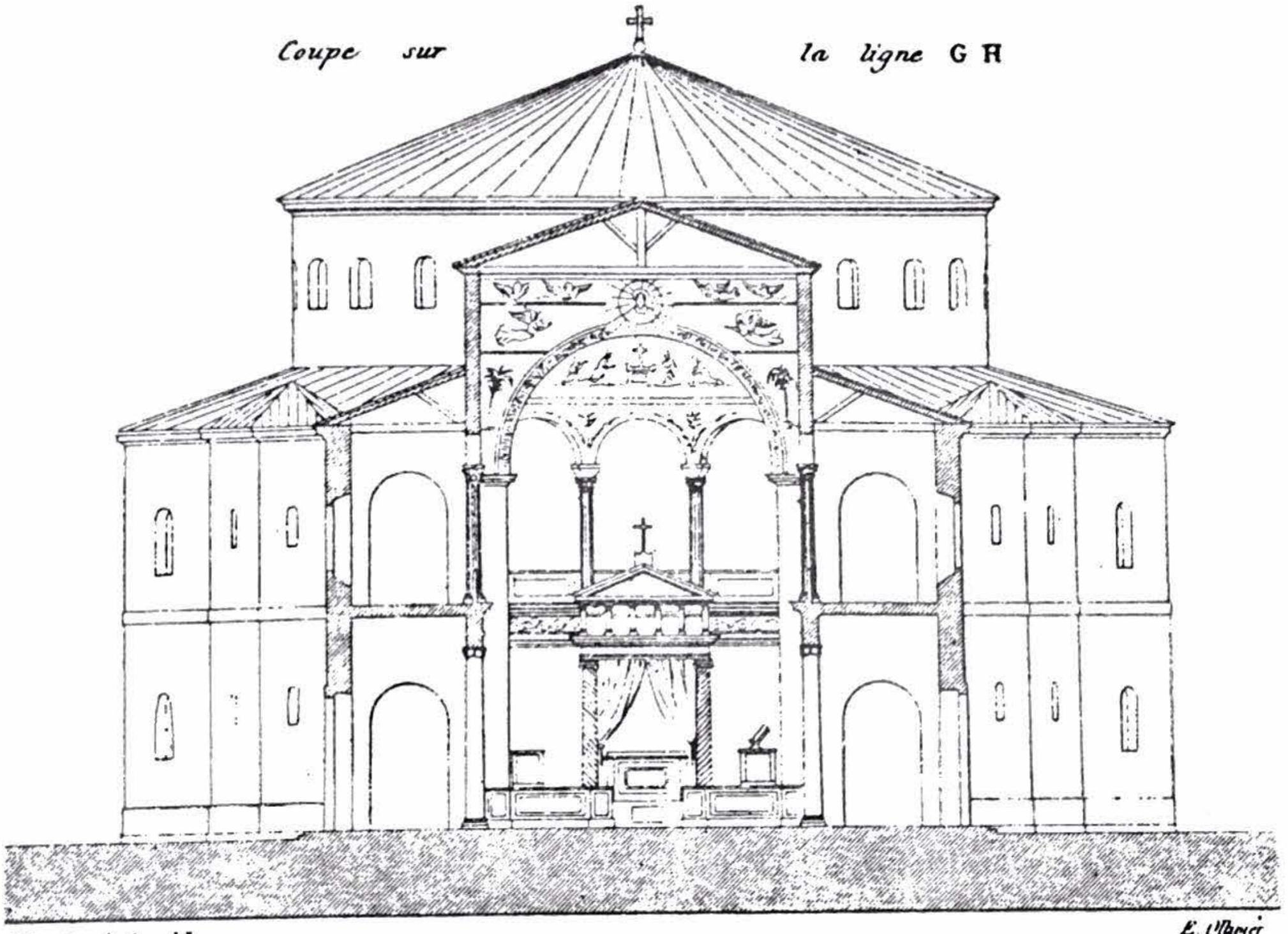
* ***The Miracles of St. Martin*, Book II, ch. 25.**



The Basilica of St. Martin in Tours in the 6th century
(as reconstructed from the writings of St. Gregory)

20. His Fervor is Spurred by an Angel.

SINCE WE HAVE just spoken of the Lord's Nativity, we shall mention what happened to our bishop one Nativity day. During the most sacred night of this solemnity, fatigued by the ceremonies of the vigil, he had lain down for a moment on his bed, when a man advanced quickly towards him and said to him: "Arise and return to church." He awoke, made the sign of the cross, and went back to sleep. The man did not desist, but gave him a second warning; but feeling himself still heavy on awakening, he fell asleep again. Then this man, coming for the third time, gave him a slap on the cheek and said to him: "It is you who should admonish the others to make them go to the vigil, and here it is you who let yourself be so long overcome by sleep." Struck by these words, Gregory returned to church with a rapid step.** He was so pleasing in the eyes of the Most High that he was not permitted, even under the excuse of human weakness, to neglect his salvation for a moment.

** *The Glory of the Martyrs*, ch. 87. (*To be continued.*)

The JERUSALEM *Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God*

III.

ATTEMPTS OF JEWS AND HERETICS TO DISHONOR THE EVER-VIRGINITY OF MARY.

THE JEWISH SLANDERERS soon became convinced that it was almost impossible to dishonor the Mother of Jesus, and on the basis of the informa- which they themselves possessed it was much easier to prove Her praiseworthy life. Therefore, they abandoned this slander of theirs, which had already been taken up by the pagans (Origen, *Against Celsus,* I), and strove to prove at least that Mary was not a virgin when She gave birth to Christ. They even said that the prophecies concerning the birth-giving of the Messiah by a virgin had never existed, and that therefore it was entirely in vain that Christians thought to exalt Jesus by the fact that a prophecy was supposedly being fulfilled in Him.

Jewish translators were found (Aquila, Simach, Theodotion) who made new translations of the Old Testament into Greek and in these translated the well-known prophecy of Isaiah (Is.7:14) thus: "Behold, a young woman will conceive." They affirmed that the Hebrew word *Aalma* signified "young woman" and not "virgin," as stood in the sacred translation of the Seventy Translators [Septuagint], where this passage had been translated "Behold, a virgin shall conceive."

By this new translation they wished to prove that Christians, on the basis of an incorrect translation of the word *Aalma,* thought to ascribe to Mary something completely impossible — a birth-giving without a man, while in actuality the birth of Christ was not in the least different from other human births.

The Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God

by Archbishop John Maximovitch

However, the evil intention of the new translators was clearly revealed, because by a comparison of various passages in the Bible it became clear that the word *Aalma* signified precisely "virgin." And indeed, not only the Jews, but even the pagans, on the basis of their own traditions and various prophecies, expected the Redeemer of the world to be born of a Virgin. The Gospels clearly stated that the Lord Jesus had been born of a Virgin.

How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? asked Mary, Who had given a vow of virginity, of the Archangel Gabriel, who had informed Her of the birth of Christ.

And the Angel replied: *The Holy Spirit shall come upon Thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow Thee; wherefore also that which is to be born shall be holy, and shall be called the Son of God* (Luke 1:34-35).

Later the Angel appeared also to righteous Joseph, who had wished to put away Mary from his house, seeing that She had conceived without entering into conjugal cohabitation with him. To Joseph the Archangel Gabriel said: *Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is begotten in Her is of the Holy Spirit,* and reminded him of the prophecy of Isaiah that a virgin would conceive (Matt. 1:18-25).

The rod of Aaron that budded, the rock torn away from the mountain without hands, seen by Nebuchadnezzar in a dream and interpreted by the Prophet Daniel, the closed gate seen by the Prophet Ezekiel, and much else in the Old Testament, prefigured the birth-giving of the Virgin. Just as Adam had been created by the Word of God from the unworked and virgin earth, so also the Word of God created flesh for Himself from a virgin womb when the Son of God became the new Adam so as to correct the fall into sin of the first Adam (St. Irenæus of Lyons, Book III).

The seedless birth of Christ can and could be denied only by those who deny the Gospel, whereas the Church of Christ from of old confesses Christ "incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary." But the birth of God

from the Ever-Virgin was a stumbling-stone for those who wished to call themselves Christians but did not wish to humble themselves in mind and be zealous for purity of life. The pure life of Mary was a reproach for those who were impure also in their thoughts. So as to show themselves Christians, they did not dare to deny that Christ was born of a Virgin, but they began to affirm that Mary remained a Virgin only "until She brought forth Her first-born son, Jesus" (Matt. 1:25).

"After the birth of Jesus," said the false teacher Helvidius in the 4th century, and likewise many others before and after him, "Mary entered into conjugal life with Joseph and had from him children, who are called in the Gospels the brothers and sisters of Christ." But the word "until" does not signify that Mary remained a virgin only until a certain time. The word "until" and words similar to it often signify eternity. In the Sacred Scripture it is said of Christ: "In His days shall shine forth righteousness and an abundance of peace, *until* the moon be taken away" (Ps. 71:7), but this does not mean that when there shall no longer be a moon at the end of the world, God's righteousness shall no longer be; precisely then, rather, will it triumph. And what does it mean when it says: "For He must reign, *until* He hath put all enemies under His feet?" (I Cor. 15:25). Is the Lord then to reign only for the time until His enemies shall be under His feet?! And David, in the fourth Psalm of the Ascents says: "As the eyes of the handmaid look unto the hands of her mistress, so do our eyes look unto the Lord our God, *until* He take pity on us" (Ps. 122:2). Thus, the Prophet will have his eyes toward the Lord until he obtains mercy, but having obtained it he will direct them to the earth? (Blessed Jerome, "On the Ever-Virginity of Blessed Mary.") The Saviour in the Gospel says to the Apostles (Matt. 28:20):"Lo, I am with you alway, even *unto* the end of the world." Thus, after the end of the world the Lord will step away from His disciples, and then, when they shall judge the twelve tribes of Israel upon twelve thrones, they will not have the promised communion with the Lord? (Blessed Jerome, op. cit.)

It is likewise incorrect to think that the brothers and sisters of Christ were the children of His Most Holy Mother. The names of "brother" and "sister" have several distinct meanings. Signifying a certain kinship between people or their spiritual closeness, these words are used sometimes in a broader, and sometimes in a narrower sense. In any case, people are called brothers or sisters if they have a common father or mother, or only a common father or mother; or even if they have different fathers and mothers, if their parents

later (having become widowed) have entered into marriage (step-brothers); or if their parents are bound by close degrees of kinship.

In the Gospel it can nowhere be seen that those who are called there the brothers of Jesus were or were considered the children of His Mother. On the contrary, it was known that James and others were the sons of Joseph, the Betrothed of Mary, who was a widower with children from his first wife. (St. Epiphanius of Cyprus, *Panarion,* 78.) Likewise, the sister of His Mother, Mary the wife of Cleophas, who stood with Her at the Cross of the Lord (John 19:25), also had children, who in view of such close kinship with full right could be called brothers of the Lord. That the so-called brothers and sisters of the Lord were not the children of His Mother is clearly evident from the fact that the Lord entrusted His Mother before His death to His beloved disciple John. Why should He do this if She had other children besides Him? They themselves would have taken care of Her. The sons of Joseph, the supposed father of Jesus, did not consider themselves obliged to take care of one they regarded as their stepmother, or at least did not have for Her such love as blood children have for parents, and such as the adopted John had for Her.

Thus, a careful study of Sacred Scripture reveals with complete clarity the insubstantiality of the objections against the Ever-Virginity of Mary and puts to shame those who teach differently.

IV.

The Nestorian Heresy and the Third Ecumenical Council.

WHEN ALL THOSE who had dared to speak against the sanctity and purity of the MostHoly Virgin Mary had been reduced to silence, an attempt was made to destroy Her veneration as *Mother of God.* In the 5th century the Archbishop of Constantinople, Nestorius, began to preach that of Mary had been born only the man Jesus, in Whom the Divinity had taken abode and dwelt in Him as in a temple. At first he allowed his presbyter Anastasius and then he himself began to teach openly in church that one should not call Mary Theotokos, since She had not given birth to the God-man. He considered it demeaning for himself to worship a child wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

Such sermons evoked a universal disturbance and unease over the purity of faith, at first in Constantinople and then everywhere else where rumors of

the new teaching spread. St. Proclus, the disciple of St. John Chrysostom, who was then Bishop of Cyzicus and later became Archbishop of Constantinople, in the presence of Nestorius gave in church a sermon in which he confessed the Son of God born in the flesh of the Virgin, Who in truth is the Theotokos (Birth-giver of God), for already in the womb of the Most Pure One, at the time of Her conception, the Divinity was united with the Child conceived of the Holy Spirit; and this Child, even though He was born of the Virgin Mary only in His human nature, still was born already true God and true man.

Nestorius stubbornly refused to change his teaching, saying that one must distinguish between Jesus and the Son of God, that Mary should not be called Theotokos, but Christotokos (Birth-giver of Christ), since the Jesus Who was born of Mary was only the man Christ (which signifies Messiah, anointed one), like to God's anointed ones of old, the prophets, only surpassing them in fullness of communion with God. The teaching of Nestorius thus constituted a denial of the whole economy of God, for if from Mary only a man was born, then it was not God Who suffered for us, but a man.

St. Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria, finding out about the teaching of Nestorius and about the church disorders evoked by this teaching in Constantinople, wrote a letter to Nestorius, in which he tried to persuade him to hold the teaching which the Church had confessed from its foundation, and not to introduce anything novel into this teaching. In addition, St. Cyril wrote to the clergy and people of Constantinople that they should be firm in the Orthodox faith and not fear the persecutions by Nestorius against those who were not in agreement with him. St. Cyril also wrote informing of everything to Rome, to the holy Pope Celestine, who with all his flock was then firm in Orthodoxy.

St. Celestine for his part wrote to Nestorius and called upon him to preach the Orthodox faith, and not his own. But Nestorius remained deaf to all persuasion and replied that what he was preaching *was* the Orthodox faith, while his opponents were heretics. St. Cyril wrote Nestorius again and composed twelve anathemas, that is, set forth in twelve paragraphs the chief differences of the Orthodox teaching from the teaching preached by Nestorius, acknowledging as excommunicated from the Church everyone who should reject even a single one of the paragraphs he had composed.

Nestorius rejected the whole of the text composed by St. Cyril and wrote his own exposition of the teaching which he preached, likewise in twelve

The ABALAK *Icon of the Mother of God of the Sign: "And the Word was made Flesh."*

paragraphs, giving over to anathema (that is, excommunication from the Church) everyone who did not accept it. The danger to purity of faith was increasing all the time. St. Cyril wrote a letter to Theodosius the Younger, who was then reigning, to his wife Eudocia and to the Emperor's sister Pulcheria, entreating them likewise to concern themselves with ecclesiastical matters and restrain the heresy.

It was decided to convene an *Ecumenical Council,* at which hierarchs gathered from the ends of the world should decide whether the faith preached by Nestorius were Orthodox. As the place for the council, which was to be the Third Ecumenical Council, they chose the city of Ephesus, in which the Most Holy Virgin Mary had once dwelt together with the Apostle John the Theologian. St. Cyril gathered his fellow bishops in Egypt and together with them travelled by sea to Ephesus. From Antioch overland came John, Archbishop of Antioch, with the Eastern bishops. The Bishop of Rome, St. Celestine, could not go himself and asked St. Cyril to defend the Orthodox faith, and in addition he sent from himself two bishops and the presbyter of the Roman Church Philip, to whom he also gave instructions as to what to say. To Ephesus there came likewise Nestorius and the bishops of the Constantinople region, and the bishops of Palestine, Asia Minor, and Cyprus.

(To be continued.)

The TYPICON *of the Orthodox Church's Divine Services*

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE MAGNIFICATION

AFTER THE SINGING of the Polyeleos, with its final, triumphant "Alleluia," there follows a brief moment of expectant silence, and then all the clergy, in the center of the church before the icon of the feast or saint, with the offering of incense, begin the singing of the Magnification. M. Skaballanovich, in his commentary on the Typicon (Kiev, 1913, vol. II, p. 234), thus describes this central part of the All-night Vigil:

"The saint, whose icon is surrounded by the clergy, stands as visible in the church among the faithful... If the icon depicts an event, it is as it were repeated in the midst of the faithful, and the clergy, as the most worthy, are present at its very occurrence. Thus, the glorification of the saint or event reaches at this point in the Vigil its highest degree of immediacy, when all the faithful, headed by the clergy, surround the very cause of the feast and converse with him face to face... The candles in the hands of the faithful [see above, ch. 7] signify the spiritual fervor of one's whole being in a feeling of love for the cause of the feast, and likewise as fitting for the memory of the saint, as the yearly commemoration of his repose."

After the clergy has sung the Magnification once, the chief priest (preceded by the deacon, if one is present, with a lighted candle) performs the censing of the entire church, beginning with the Altar, and during this time the faithful or the choirs sing the Magnification "many times," alternating with verses from the "Selected Psalm" which is appointed for each Magnification.

The method of execution of the Magnification with its Selected Psalm is not indicated in the Typicon, but has come down in the tradition of the

Church's practice. The number of times the Magnification is sung depends, for practical purposes, on the amount of time required for the priest to complete the censing of the church. At the maximum, the Magnification would be sung after each verse of the Selected Psalm (if there are two choirs, the verses are sung antiphonically, one verse at a time); more commonly, several verses are sung between each Magnification; and in usual parish practice no more than one or two verses of the Selected Psalm are sung. (The *Festal Menaion* in English printed by Faber and Faber has only two verses for each of the feast-day Magnifications.) The singing of the Selected Psalm is completed, as with almost every reading or singing of the Psalms, with "Glory," "Both now," and "Alleluia," sung by the people (or antiphonically by the two choirs), and the final triumphant Magnification — once the priest has come back to his place in the center of the church before the icon — is sung by the clergy.

Nothing is said in the Typicon about the order for singing two Magnifications, such as might occur when the commemoration of a great saint and a feast of the movable calendar coincide, or when two great saints or a saint and an icon of the Mother of God are commemorated on the same day — although the Slavonic Menaion does indicate that the singing of two Magnifications is sometimes appropriate. Here, therefore, the celebrant is given some freedom in the method of execution; and indeed, one should recall here again that the Typicon is not intended to be a "strait-jacket," and that its rules are to inspire our fervor and piety and not to bind us to a mere "correct performance" of them which leaves our soul unmoved. The very meaning of the Magnification is to serve as a means for expressing our love and veneration for a saint or for the Lord or His Mother. We may take as a model of our freedom here an example from the practice of Archbishop John Maximovitch, who was certainly an "expert" in his knowledge of the Typicon: When he would serve in the convent of the Vladimir Mother of God in San Francisco on its patronal feast (May 21), when the Typicon prescribes that no other feast may be combined with that of the church itself, at the conclusion of the Magnification of the Mother of God, he would then "break the rule" by singing the Magnification to Sts. Constantine and Helen (who are also commemorated on this day), so as to express in some way veneration and love for these great saints. On other days when two Magnifications might be called for, one might sing them one at a time with alternate verses from the two Selected Psalms, or perhaps the two Magnifications in succession between each verse or set or verses.

If a Magnification occurs on Sunday, it is sung in its normal place after the Polyeleos and before the singing of the Sunday troparia and their refrain ("Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes"). In common practice it is sung only once in this case, since the censing of the church begins only with the singing of the troparia; but actually it is appropriate to sing it several times here also, with one or more verses of the Selected Psalm — but without "Glory," "Both now" and "Alleluia," which are sung at the end of the troparia.

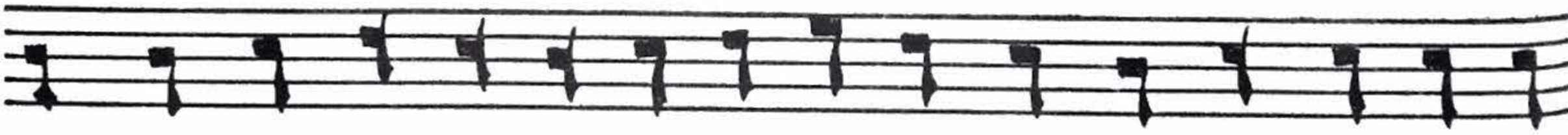
If a community does not have a priest, the beginning and concluding Magnifications are also sung by the people or choir.

There is a separate Magnification for each major feast and for each class of saint (hierarch, martyr, etc.). Since they are brief, very similar to each other (and thus easily memorized), and express the Church's veneration for the feast or saint in its most direct and concentrated form, the Magnifications are perhaps the most convenient and accessible of the Church's hymns for the ordinary faithful; even when no service books are available, the Magnification of a saint may be sung with no difficulty.

The most commonly used melody for the Magnification in the Russian tradition is that of Kievan chant; all the Magnifications are sung to the same melody as in the example here given, which is that of monk-saints

(An explanation of the quadratic musical notation is given in *The Orthodox Word,* 1974, no. 4. Briefly: "Do" of the major scale, or "Middle C," is located on the middle line, and there are no sharps or flats. In common practice, however, the "do" is sometimes sung as a sharp; in the present example all "dos" marked with an asterisk under the text are usually sung as sharps. This seems to be a concession to the modern ear; the more ancient chants, such as the Magnification in Znamenny chant which follows, are preferably sung with the "do" natural, not sharped.)

THE MAGNIFICATION

KIEVAN CHANT

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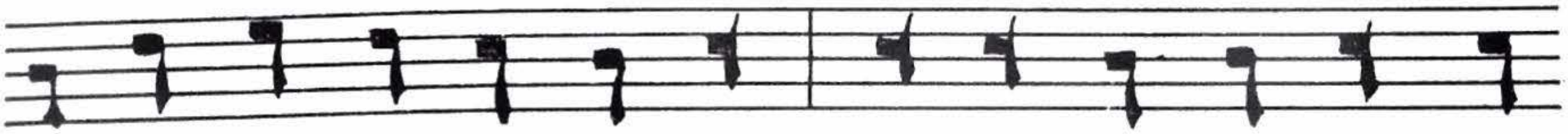
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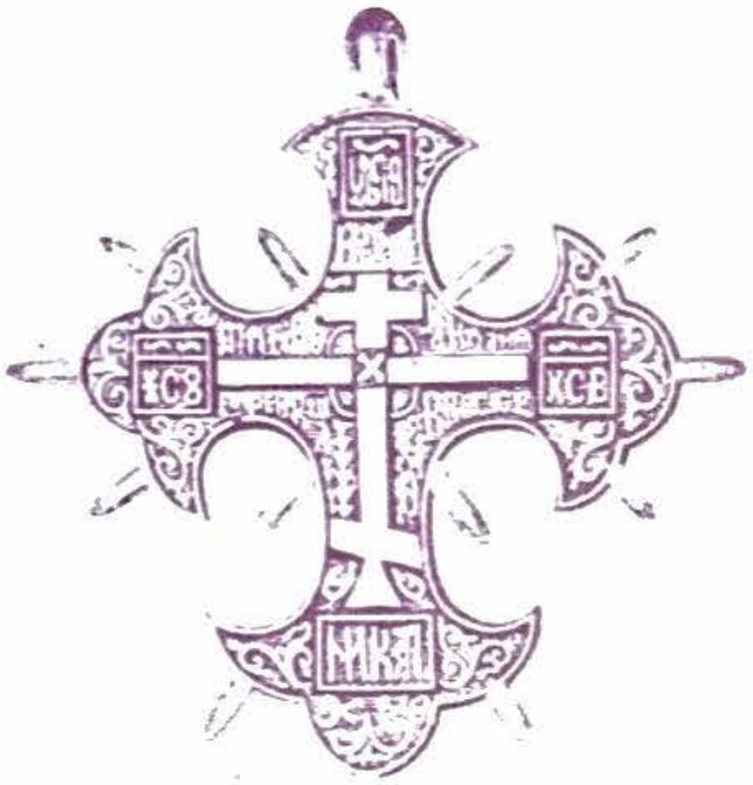

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